

MFHA CROSS COUNTRY TEAM CHASE RULES

1. **ACCEPTANCE OF RULES** - All Events run under the auspices of the MFHA Governing Body shall be run in accordance with these Rules and shall accept and be bound by these Rules. All competitors at such events shall also accept and be bound by such Rules. Individual events may not impose their own Rules for their event but may impose administrative regulations as they see fit.
2. **RIDERS RESPONSIBILITY** - In the case of any Rule affecting riders or their horses, the rider shall be held responsible. In particular riders will be held responsible for adhering to Rules 7 (Protection), 9 (Age), 13 (Horse Welfare), 14 (Abuse of Horses), 15 (Exchanging Horses) and 20 (Personal Accident Insurance).
3. **STEWARDS** - There shall be one or more Stewards appointed by each event organiser whose decision in respect of these Rules and of Discipline shall be final, except by later appeal to the Governing Body on payment of a deposit of £50. Mounted Stewards will be on the course with authority to stop any competitor continuing on an exhausted horse or ill treating their horse. If they are not obeyed the whole team may be eliminated.
4. **TEAMS** - Each team shall consist of a maximum of four horses and riders and at least three horses and riders shall complete the course successfully for that team to finish
5. **MEDICAL MATTERS** - No event shall commence unless one Doctor, two Paramedics and two Ambulances are on duty on the course. The Organisers should be aware of and adhere to the following medical safety Rules:
 - (a) No team shall be allowed to start unless either a fully equipped Ambulance, or another Ambulance and a Doctor are available on the course (one Ambulance may have gone to hospital with an earlier casualty).
 - (b) The medical team should have radio links around the course to Control.
 - (c) The medical team should be familiar with the course and know the quickest route to any part of it.
 - (d) Scoop stretchers must be available on the course and at least one 4WD vehicle with driver capable of carrying scoop stretchers should be available.
 - (e) The local Accident Unit should be informed of the event and provision for telephone contact be known.
 - (f) Ambulances should not be used as transport for uninjured persons.
6. **CONCUSSION** - Any rider who sustains concussion shall under no circumstances compete again for at least the remainder of that day.
7. **SAFETY & PROTECTION** - With effect from the beginning of Autumn 2012 season it will be compulsory for anyone taking part in an MFHA regulated Team Chase to have a hat that has been checked and complies with the standard required by the MFHA Rules, and is colour-tagged to confirm as such. The implement this change, please note: It is compulsory for all competitors to wear crash helmets to current recognised Safety Standards, and which are identified by a Team Chasing, BE, BRC, BSJA or Pony Club approved Hat Tags ie a hat which meets one of the following standards: British All PAS15, BSEN1384 or European EN1384 provided they are BSI Kitemarked or SEI. American All SEI ASTM 95, ASTM F1163:2004, SNELL E2001. Australian and New Zealand All AS/NZS 3838. Competitors are strongly recommended to check their hats regularly and to replace them if damaged or following a fall. All those mounted at an event (including grooms and helpers) must wear a hard hat complying to the above standard when mounted.

All competitors must also wear a British Equestrian Trade Association (BETA) approved and appropriately labelled Level 3 body protector manufactured in the year 2000 or after. Competitors are strongly recommended to check their body protectors on a regular basis and replace them if damaged or following a fall and are advised that the body protector should impede neither flexibility nor balance.

All horses being ridden at an event, including riding in exercise areas, must be ridden in a bridle with reins directly attached to a bit or leather 'D' rings or attached as per the manufacturer's specification to a purpose designed bitless bridle (such as a mechanical or jumping hackamore, Dr Cook, Sidepull or Scawbrig).
8. **ACCIDENT REPORT FORMS** - An Accident Report Form is to be given to each fence steward (blank forms available from the MFHA Office) and must be completed for any Accident and returned to the Event Secretary (or Organiser). Such completed forms must be kept by the Organiser for a period of five years, or in the case of a person under the age of 18, four years after they become 18. These forms must be made available to the Course Inspector in subsequent years.
9. **RIDERS AGE** - No person shall ride until they have attained the age of sixteen in any Open, Intermediate or Novice Classes which are run against the clock, and all riders competing in such classes should ensure that they have had appropriate experience of cross country riding. At the discretion of Organisers riders under that age may be permitted to compete in classes judged against the "bogey" time.
10. **VETERINARY MATTERS AND PAYMENT FOR SERVICES** - There must be at least two Vets available on course at each event. The decision of the course Vet to put a horse down on humane grounds must be accepted by all competitors. Competitors will be expected to pay for any services received from the veterinary surgeon, farrier, horse ambulance, doctor or any other medical services
11. **HORSE CASUALTIES** - Organisers shall make adequate arrangements to deal with horse casualties, which will include the provision of suitable screens, a humane killer, at least one knacker wagon, and a suitable vehicle for use as a Horse Ambulance towed by a 4WD vehicle.
12. **EXHAUSTED HORSES** - A nominated Steward or Stewards, who must be mounted, shall be appointed to stop unfit or exhausted horses from continuing. Such an official or officials, who must be readily identifiable, shall be appointed at every event.
13. **HORSE WELFARE** - The whip should only be used for good reason, not excessively, in the right place and at the appropriate time. Spurs must not be used to reprimand a horse and a bit should never be used to abuse or reprimand a horse. Horses competing in Intermediate and Open Classes must be five years old or over.
14. **ABUSE OF HORSES** - Any act or series of actions, which in the opinion of the Stewards constitutes abuse of a horse shall be considered to be a breach of these Rules and will incur elimination.
15. **EXCHANGING HORSES** - No rider may exchange horses once a team has started. No horse may start more than once in any class.
16. **FALLS - ELIMINATION**
 - (a) Horse Falls - When a horse falls during any class, the competitor is immediately eliminated and must retire. If the competitor does continue on the course following a horse fall their team will be eliminated. A horse is considered to have fallen when at the same time its shoulder and quarters have touched either the ground or the obstacle and the ground, or when it is trapped in a fence in such a way that it is unable to proceed without assistance or is liable to injure itself. This does not prevent horses which stumble or refuse, thus unseating the rider, from being remounted to continue, subject to rule 16 (b).
 - (b) Rider Falls - After two falls which are not Horse Falls the competitor is immediately eliminated and must retire. If the competitor does continue on the course following two Rider Falls their team will be eliminated
17. **REFUSALS** - The number of refusals shall not exceed three at any one fence, or five on the course per horse, when the competitor shall be eliminated and must leave the course at once. The Team will be disqualified for an abuse of these rules by any individual member.
18. **COURSE INSPECTION** - All courses will be inspected prior to an event by an Inspector appointed by the Governing Body, who will need to be satisfied that the course meets the necessary Rules, safety standards and Course Construction Guidelines before he permits the event to go ahead. Organisers must ensure that they permit Course Inspectors early access to allow time for making any alterations required. The appointed Course Inspector should contact the Course Organisers to arrange an inspection date.
19. **UNAFFILIATED EVENTS** - No rider may compete in the Team Chase Championship, who has taken part in an unaffiliated cross country team event during the current season. Events sanctioned by the Governing Body, the British Horse Society, the Riding Clubs and the Pony Club are exempt from this Rule.

20. **INSURANCE** - All events shall ensure that public liability insurance cover for at least £5m is in place.

Personal Accident Insurance: The following wording **MUST BE** printed on all entry forms:

It is a requirement that all participants carry Third Party insurance for not less than £5m. It is also strongly recommended that all participants have Personal Accident Insurance.

N.B. If your Hunt is insured through The Hunting Office Block Liability Policy for at least £5m, then this will cover all events run by the Hunt and the Hunt Supporters Club. Third Party Insurance is covered by membership of the Countryside Alliance. It may also come with some horse insurance and house insurance, but this should be checked.

21. **ORGANISER'S RIGHTS** - The Organiser of all events reserves the right to cancel any class or event, to transfer competitors between classes, to refuse any entry, to alter advertised times, to withhold all or any prize money, and to eliminate any competitor to be adjudged not to be adhering to the Rules or who is deemed to be wearing or using inappropriate dress, saddlery and/or equipment.

22. **DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY** - Save for death or personal injury caused by the negligence of Organisers for which they are legally responsible, neither the Organisers of any event to which these Rules apply, nor any representative of these bodies accepts any liability for any accident, loss damage, injury or illness to horses, owners, riders, spectators, land, vehicles, contents or accessories or any other person whatever, whether caused by their negligence or in any other way.

23. **CLASSES** - Only the following terms shall be used to define classes:

- a) Novice. Fixed obstacles which are not to exceed 3'3". Length of course to be approximately 1.5 miles.
- b) Intermediate. The majority of fixed obstacles to be approximately 3'6", but not to exceed 3'9". Length of course to be approximately 1.75 miles.
- c) Open. The majority of fixed obstacles to be not less than 3'6". Length of course to be approximately 2 miles, and not less than 1.5 miles.

Organisers should also note:

- i) If the term "Allcomers" is used, it must be preceded by the word "Novice", "Intermediate" or "Open", whichever best describes the course.
- ii) Only "Open" or "Open Allcomers" classes may be considered as qualifiers for the Team Chase Championship.
- iii) Events that have an Open Qualifier must run their Intermediate class against the clock (but can run part of the class against a Bogey Time).
- iv) A "Fun" class is held entirely at the Organisers discretion, but must be decided by a "bogey" time.

24. **THE PEN** - The first three horses entering the pen should have twelve feet on the floor before anyone jumps out. The penalty for failing to observe this rule to be the addition of 20 seconds per team. There should be at least one fence judge purely to watch for this.

25. **ELIMINATION ON COURSE** - If at least 3 members of the team have not completed the course within 8 minutes of the team starting, the team will be eliminated.

26. **DEPOSIT FOR NUMBER BIBS** - A refundable deposit of £10 per team shall be payable to the secretary for number bibs.

27. **COMPLAINTS AND OBJECTIONS** - Any complaint or objection in relation to an alleged breach of these rules shall be lodged with the event secretary within 10 minutes of the last horse completing the class in which the alleged breach occurred together with payment of a deposit of £40 which will be refunded if the complaint or objection is upheld. The stewards shall use their best endeavours to investigate and hold an enquiry into the complaint or objection within a reasonable time.

28. **REPORT TO COLLECTING RING** - All teams must report to the collecting ring steward at a reasonable time before their running order.

29. **JUMPING ORDER** - Competitors must jump the fences in numerical order and leave red fags on their right and white flags on their left. Any competitor who misses a fence must either return and jump that fence and subsequent fences in the correct order or shall be eliminated and must retire from the course.